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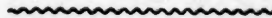
## CONFERENCE OF THE BISHOPS

OF

QUEBEC, TORONTO, NEWFOUNDLAND, FREDERICTON,  
AND MONTREAL,

HOLDEN AT QUEBEC,

FROM SEPT. 24<sup>th</sup> TO OCT. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1851.



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## I. GENERAL DECLARATION.

We the undersigned, Bishops of the North American Colonies in the Province of Canterbury, having had opportunity granted to us of meeting together, have thereupon conferred with each other respecting the trust and charge committed to our hands, and certain peculiar difficulties of a local nature which attach to the same.

We desire, therefore, in the first place, to record our thankfulness that we have been so permitted to assemble, and our sense of the responsibility lying upon us before GOD and the world to promote the Glory of His great name, to advance the kingdom of His Son, to seek the salvation of immortal souls, and what we feel to be inseparably united with these objects, to establish and extend, wherever there is a demand for her services, the system, the teaching, the worship, and the ordinances of the United Church of England and Ireland.

We feel that, in the prosecution of this great work, we are surrounded by many discouragements, embarrassments and hindrances, which, by the grace of GOD, we are prepared patiently to encounter, and, while they may be appointed to continue, patiently to endure,

but for which, nevertheless, it is our duty to seek all lawful remedy, if such remedy is to be found.

We have therefore prepared the statement which follows, of our views in relation to these subjects of our care and sollicitude ; and we desire to commend it to the favorable consideration of our Metropolitan, His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, in the hope that he may be moved to assist us in obtaining relief from those evils of which we have to complain, as well as to counsel us in the disposal of questions which come before us in the exercise of our Episcopal duties.

## II. CONVOCATION.

In consequence of the anomalous state of the Church of England in these Colonies with reference to its General Government, and the doubts entertained as to the validity of any Code of Ecclesiastical Law, the Bishops of these Dioceses experience great difficulty in acting in accordance with their Episcopal Commission and Prerogatives, and their decisions are liable to misconstruction, as if emanating from their individual will, and not from the general body of the Church ; we therefore consider it desirable, in the first place, that the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church of England in each Diocese should meet together in Synod, at such times and in such manner as may be agreed. Secondly, that the Laity in such

Synod should meet by representation, and that their Representatives be Communicants. Thirdly, it is our opinion that, as questions will arise from time to time which will affect the welfare of the Church in these Colonies, it is desirable that the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity should meet in Council under a Provincial Metropolitan, with power to frame such rules and regulations for the better conduct of our Ecclesiastical affairs as by the said Council may be deemed expedient. Fourthly, that the said Council should be divided into two houses, the one consisting of the Bishops of these several Dioceses under their Metropolitan, and the other of the Presbyters and Lay Members of the Church assembled (as before mentioned) by representation.

Upon these grounds it appears to us necessary that a Metropolitan should be appointed for the North American Dioceses.

### III. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

Doubts being entertained who are to be regarded as Members of the Church of England in these Colonies, and as such, what are their special duties and rights, we are of opinion that Church Membership requires (1) admission into the Christian Covenant by Holy Baptism, as our Lord commanded, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" (2) that all Church Members are bound, according



to their knowledge and opportunities, to consent and conform to the rules and ordinances of the Church, and (8) according to their ability, and as GOD hath blessed them, to contribute to the support of the Church ; and specially of those who minister to them in holy things. Upon the fulfilment of these duties, they may, as Church Members, claim at our hands and at the hands of our Clergy generally, all customary services and ministrations.

We cheerfully recognize the duty and privilege of preaching the Gospel to the poor, and of allowing to those who can make us no worldly recompense the same claim upon our services, in public and in private, which we grant to the more wealthy members of our flocks.

We are further of opinion that Church Members in full communion, are those only who receive with their brethren the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at the hands of their lawful ministers, as directed and enjoined by the Canons and Rubrics of our Prayer Book. Persons chosen as representatives of any Parish or Mission to attend any Synod or Convocation, should in every case be Members of the Church in full Communion.

#### IV. CANONS OF 1603-4.

Although it is confessedly impossible under existing circumstances to observe all these Canons, yet we

are of opinion that they should be complied with so far as is lawful and practicable. But inasmuch as the retention of rules which cannot be obeyed is manifestly inexpedient, and tends to lessen the respect due to all laws, we hold that a revision of the Canons is highly desirable, provided it be done by competent authority.

## V. ARTICLES AND FORMULARIES.

Whereas the multiplication of sects, among those who profess and call themselves Christians, appealing to the same Scriptures in support of divers and conflicting doctrines, renders a fixed and uniform standard and interpretation of Scripture more than ever necessary, we desire to express our thankfulness to Almighty GOD for the preservation of the Book of Common Prayer, our entire and cordial agreement with the Articles and Formularies of our Church, taken in their literal sense, and our earnest wish (as far as in us lies) faithfully to teach the doctrines and to use the offices of our Church in the manner prescribed in the said Book. And we desire that all the Members of our Church should accept the teaching of the Prayer Book, as, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, their best help in the understanding of Holy Scripture, and as the ground work of the religious education of their children.



## VI. DIVISION OF SERVICES.

We are of opinion that the Bishop, as ordinary, may authorize the division of the Morning Service, by the use of the Morning Prayer, Litany, or Communion Service, separately, as may be required ; but that no private Clergyman has authority, at his own discretion, to abridge or alter the Services or Offices, or to change the Lessons of the Church.

## VII. PSALMS AND HYMNS.

Whereas the multiplication in churches of different Hymn Books, published without authority, is irregular in itself, and has a tendency to promote division among us, we are of opinion that a judicious selection of Psalms and Hymns by competent authority would tend much to the furtherance of devotion and to the edification of pious Churchmen.

## VIII. OFFERTORY.

We are of opinion that it is desirable and seemly, and would tend to a uniformity of practice among us, that whenever a collection is made after Sermon, in time of Morning Prayer, the Offertory Sentences should be read, and the Prayer for the Church Militant should be used.

## IX. HOLY COMMUNION.

We hold it to be of great importance that the Clergy should attend to the directions of the Rubric which precede the administration of the Holy Communion, respecting "open and notorious evil livers, and those who have done wrong to their neighbours by word or deed, and those also betwixt whom they perceive malice and hatred to reign," and that the Members of the Church should signify to the Minister their intention to present themselves at the Holy Table, especially when they arrive in any place as strangers, or when, being residents in such place, they are purposing to communicate for the first time. We conceive that it would greatly promote the welfare of the Church, if all our members, who may be travelling from one place to another, were furnished with a certificate of their membership and of their standing in the Church.

## X. MARRIAGES.

We hold that a Clergyman knowingly celebrating marriage between persons, who are related to each other within the prohibited degrees set forth in a table of degrees published by our Church in the year of our Lord GOD, 1563, is acting in violation of the laws of God and of the Church, and is liable to censure and punishment: and that persons who contract

such marriages should not be admitted to the Holy Communion, except upon repentance and putting away their sin. And we recommend that the aforesaid "Table of Prohibited Degrees" should be put up in every Church in our Dioceses. We are further of opinion that injustice is done our Church in withholding from our Bishops the power of granting marriage Licences which is exercised by the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church: and that in several Dioceses great irregularities, and grievous evils, prevail in consequence of the defective state of the Marriage Law. We also hold that the Clergy of our Church should abstain from celebrating a marriage between persons, both of whom professedly belong to another Communion, except in cases where the services of no other Minister can be procured.

#### XI. REGISTERS.

We would earnestly recommend to the Clergy of our Dioceses (even though it should not be required by the Civil Law) to keep accurate Registers of Marriages, Baptisms, and Burials, in their several Parishes or Missions.

#### XII. INTERCOMMUNION WITH OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES.

We are of opinion that it is much to be desired that there should be no let or hindrance to a full and free

Communion between ourselves and other Reformed Episcopal Churches; and therefore that where we derive our orders from the same source, hold the same doctrines, and are virtually united as members of the same body of Christ, those impediments which (as we are advised) are now in force through the operation of the Civil Law, ought to be removed.

### XIII. EDUCATION.

#### (a) *General.*

Whereas systems of Education are very generally introduced and supported in these Colonies, either (1) excluding religious instruction altogether from the schools, or (2) recognizing no distinction between Roman Catholics and Protestants: whereby no opportunity is afforded us of bringing up the Children of our Communion in the special doctrines and duties of our Faith, to the manifest depravation of their religious principles, and with crying injustice to the Church of England, we desire to express our decided conviction:—

(1.) That all Education for the members of our Church should be distinctly based on the revealed Religion of the Old and New Testaments, with special reference to their duties and privileges as by baptism regenerate, and made GOD'S Children by adoption and grace.

(2.) That all lawful and honorable methods should be adopted to move the Colonial Legislatures to make grants to the Church of England as well as to the Roman Catholics, and other religious bodies, as they require it, and according to their numbers respectively, for the education of the members of their own Communion.

(b) *Sunday Schools.*

(1.) We desire to express our sense of the importance, in the existing state of the Church, of Sunday Schools, especially in large Towns, and we thankfully acknowledge the benefits which have resulted from the labors of pious teachers both to themselves and to their scholars, under proper direction and superintendence. In every possible case, the Sunday Schools should be under the personal direction and superintendence of the Minister of the Parish or District: or otherwise the Minister should appoint the teachers, choose the books, and regulate the course of instruction; that there be no contradiction between the teaching of the School and the Church. All Sunday Scholars should be instructed in the Church Catechism and regularly taken to Church.

(2.) We would carefully guard against the assumption that instruction in the Sunday School, even by the Minister of the Parish may be allowed to supersede the directions of the Rubrics and Canons and on the duty of



catechizing in Church : for we distinctly recognize and affirm as well the great importance, as the sacred obligation, of those directions.

(c) *Schools for the higher Classes.*

Schools for the higher Classes of both sexes are much required with particular reference to assisting the Clergy in the education of their own Children.

(d) *Collegiate Institutions.*

Although we consider it of great importance that each Bishop should connect with his Diocese some College or like Institution for the special training and preparation of young men for the Ministry of the Church ; we believe that one University for the North American Provinces with foundations for each Diocese on the model of the two great Universities, will be required to complete an Educational System, as well for Lay Students in every department of Literature and Science, as for the Students in Theology and Candidates for the sacred Ministry.

(e) *Training for the Ministry.*

In addition to the general studies pursued in the College or University, we deem it highly desirable that Candidates for the Ministry should apply themselves, under competent direction, to a systematic

course of reading in Theology for at least one whole year, or longer if possible, previous to their taking Holy Orders; and that they should likewise be instructed in the duties of the pastoral office, in correct reading and delivering of Sermons, in Church Music, Architecture, &c.

*(f) Diocesan and Parochial Libraries.*

We deem it very desirable also that Libraries should be formed in every Diocese under the direction of the Clergy, both for the Clergy themselves and for their parishioners.

#### XIV. THE ORDER OF DEACONS.

We would wish to discontinue the practice which the necessities of the Church have sometimes forced upon us, of entrusting large independent spheres of duty to young and inexperienced men in Deacons' Orders, deeming it desirable that every Deacon should, if possible, be placed under the direction of an experienced Priest.

#### XV. MAINTENANCE OF THE CLERGY.

While we hold it to be the duty of Christian Governments to maintain inviolate whatever endowments have been lawfully and religiously made for the establishment, support or extension of the Christian

Religion ; and while we acknowledge, with heart-felt gratitude, the aid given to our missions by *the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* to whose fostering care and bounty the Church in these Colonies owes, under GOD, its existence and means of usefulness, we desire to record our conviction that the Ordinances of the Church will never be rightly valued, nor its strength fully developed, until the people, for whose benefit the Clergy minister in holy things, furnish a more adequate support to the Institutions and to the Clergy of their Church.

Further, as *the Society*, in consequence of numerous and increasing claims in all parts of the world, is compelled gradually to withdraw its aid, we desire to impress on all our flocks the duty of fulfilling their obligations in respect of the payment of their Ministers; and, with a view to this object, we recommend that the Churchwardens in each parish or mission should furnish every year to the Bishop a written return, duly certified by themselves and by the Clergyman, of the sums paid towards his support for the current year.

## XVI. CONCLUSION.

Lastly, while we acknowledge it to be the bounden duty of ourselves and our Clergy, by GOD'S grace assisting us, in our several stations, to do the work of good evangelists, yet we desire to remember that we

have most solemnly pledged ourselves to fulfil this work of our ministry, according to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, and as faithful subjects of Her most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, "unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction." And we cannot forbear expressing our unfeigned thankfulness to Almighty GOD that He has preserved to us, in this branch of Christ's Holy Church, the assurance of an Apostolic commission for our Ministerial calling; and, together with it, a confession of pure and catholic truth, and the fulness of sacramental grace. May He graciously be pleased to direct and guide us all in the use of these precious gifts, enable us to serve Him in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life, and finally bring us to His Heavenly Kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Signed,)

G. J. QUEBEC.

JOHN TORONTO.

EDWARD NEWFOUNDLAND.

JOHN FREDERICTON.

F. MONTREAL.

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